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Glyphosate Exposure During Pregnancy Raises Child's Risk of Poor Brain Function

A study published in Environmental Research finds an association between adverse neurodevelopment, including brain function and development, among infants and exposure to the herbicide glyphosate during pregnancy.

By Beyond Pesticides

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A study published in Environmental Research finds an association between adverse neurodevelopment (brain function and development) among infants and exposure to the herbicide glyphosate during pregnancy (gestational).

Moreover, neurodevelopment becomes more pronounced at 24 months or two years.

The increasing prevalence of neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs) in the U.S. has raised concerns about the impact of toxic exposures on child development.

Given the disproportionate exposure burden in the U.S., children from marginalized groups and low-income families are more likely to face a variety of harmful threats that can negatively affect childhood development. These disparities are linked to neurodevelopmental disorders.

NDDs are defined as conditions related to the functioning of the nervous system and the brain, including attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, autism, learning difficulties, intellectual disability (cognitive impairment), conduct disorders, cerebral palsy and challenges related to vision and hearing.

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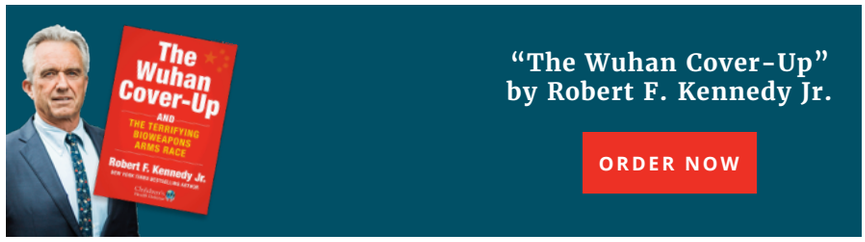

Therefore, the study notes:

> "Given glyphosate's wide usage, further investigation into the impact of gestational glyphosate exposure on neurodevelopment is warranted."

The study includes mother-child pairs in a Puerto Rican birth cohort called PROTECT-CRECE, which measures urinary glyphosate and aminomethylphosphonic acid (AMPA, a metabolite breakdown product of glyphosate) levels from mother and child for analysis.

The study collected samples from the mother up to three times during pregnancy.

After birth, the researchers examined child neurodevelopment at six, 12 and 24 months using the Battelle Developmental Inventory, 2nd edition Spanish (BDI-2).

The BDI-2 assessment scored children on adaptive, personal-social, communication, motor and cognitive domains.

The results find a negative association between prenatal AMPA concentrations from the mother during pregnancy and child communication at 12 months.

At 24 months, researchers found that AMPA is negatively associated with four BDI-2 scores, including adaptive, personal-social, communication and cognitive skills.

Additionally, glyphosate concentrations displayed similar trends in the negative association of BDI-2 scores.

Almost five decades of extensive glyphosate-based herbicide use (e.g., Roundup) has put human, animal and environmental health at risk.

The chemical's ubiquity threatens 93% of all U.S. endangered species, resulting in biodiversity loss and ecosystem disruption (e.g., soil erosion and loss of services).

Exposure to glyphosate-based herbicides has implications for specific alterations in microbial gut composition and trophic cascades.

Moreover, four out of five U.S. individuals over six years have detectable levels of glyphosate in their bodies.

Similar to this paper, past studies find a strong association between glyphosate exposure and the development of various health anomalies, including cancer, Parkinson's disease and autism.

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Although the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) classifies glyphosate herbicides as "not likely to be carcinogenic to humans," stark evidence demonstrates links to various cancers, including non-Hodgkin lymphoma.

With the ever-present environmental hazards, advocates argue that regulators act quickly and embrace a precautionary approach.

Because of the disproportionate risk in people of color communities, the

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contamination and poisoning associated with glyphosate is an environmental justice issue.

Not only do health officials warn that continuous use of glyphosate will perpetuate adverse health effects, but that use also highlights recent concerns over antibiotic resistance.

Both human gut and environmental contamination can promote antibiotic resistance, triggering longer-lasting infections, higher medical expenses and the inability to treat life-threatening illnesses.

This study adds to a multitude of research indicating the neurotoxic impacts of glyphosate-based herbicide exposure, especially regarding impairment of cognition and social behavioral skills among children.

Despite many studies finding other adverse health impacts among children from glyphosate exposure, the study highlights the need for more research on the developmental toxicity of AMPA due to the lack of neurotoxicological investigation.

However, a 2022 study found AMPA induces deoxyribonucleic acid, or DNA damage through oxidative stress among subpopulations of primary school children in Cyprus.

Moreover, studies highlight the susceptibility of children to glyphosate, with their higher propensity for absorption and retention, which is especially concerning.

The possibility that even regulated levels of exposure may harbor unacknowledged dangers necessitates a more cautious approach to such chemicals.

Glyphosate-based herbicides' impact on reproductive health is an increasingly common phenomenon and this study adds to the growing scientific evidence that glyphosate is a reproductive toxicant.

A recent University of Michigan study already demonstrates high levels of glyphosate in urine during the third trimester of pregnancy have significant associations with preterm birth outcomes.

Thus, EPA's classification perpetuates adverse impacts, especially among vulnerable individuals such as pregnant women and infants.

Recent research detects over 100 chemicals, including glyphosate, in pregnant women's bodies, with 89% of compounds of unknown origin or lacking adequate data.

Many of these environmental pollutants (e.g., heavy metals, polychlorinated biphenyl and pesticides) are chemicals that can move from the mother to the developing fetus at higher exposure rates.

Hence, prenatal exposure to these chemicals may increase the prevalence of birth-related health consequences like natal abnormalities and learning/developmental disabilities.

In 2017, Beyond Pesticides reported that prior research found detectable levels of glyphosate in 63 of 69 expectant mothers. Women with higher chemical levels have significantly shorter pregnancies and babies with lower birth weights.

While studies are now finding associations, there has been evidence of glyphosate's impact on birth outcomes for decades.

Beyond Pesticides challenges the registration of chemicals like glyphosate in court due to their impacts on soil, air, water and our health.

While legal battles press on, the agricultural system should eliminate the use of toxic synthetic herbicides to avoid the myriad of problems they cause.

Chemical exposures have real, tangible impacts not only on individuals but on society as a whole. Pesticides impose what advocates characterize as unnecessary hazards on children's health, given the availability of alternative practices and products.

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Early life exposures during "critical windows of vulnerability" can predict the likelihood or otherwise increase the chances of an individual encountering a range of pernicious diseases. Environmental disease in children costs an estimated $76.8 billion annually.

Exposures that harm learning and development also impact future economic growth in the form of lost brain power, racking up a debt to society in the hundreds of billions of dollars.

Therefore, it is essential to mitigate preventable exposure to disease-inducing pesticides.

For more information about pesticides' effects on human and animal health, see Beyond Pesticides' Pesticide-Induced Diseases Database, including pages on immune system disorders (e.g., hepatitis [liver condition]), birth abnormalities and brain and nervous system disorders.

One way to reduce human and environmental contamination from pesticides is to buy, grow and support organic.

Numerous studies show that switching to an organic diet can rapidly and drastically reduce the levels of synthetic pesticides in one's body.

A 2020 study found a one-week switch to an organic diet reduced an individual's glyphosate body burden by 70%.

Furthermore, given the wide availability of non-pesticidal alternative strategies, these methods can promote a safe and healthy environment, especially among chemically vulnerable individuals or those with health conditions.

For more information on why organic is the right choice for consumers and the farmworkers that grow our food, see the Beyond Pesticides webpage, Health Benefits of Organic Agriculture.

Originally published by Beyond Pesticides.

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Beyond Pesticides

Beyond Pesticides is a nonprofit organization headquartered in Washington, D.C., which works with allies in protecting public health and the environment to lead the transition to a world free of toxic pesticides.

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BarbaraCharis

2 days ago

Glyphosate destroys the value of the soil...no value soil...means no value food.. It is better to avoid conventionally raised produce and raise your own, if possible. Organic is more expenive, when it should be less. It used to be in the past that all crops were organic. The soil had nutrients and the growing crop had the ability to defend itself from pests.. Our immune systems are the same way. If we feed our bodies right, we will have natural immunity and the abilty to defend our bodies from disease. However, if we eat pesticide rich foods, we are asking for trouble. Pesticides are poison!

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BChristine

2 days ago edited

To expand on the title of this article "Glyphosate Exposure During Pregnancy Raises Child's Risk of Poor Brain Function" ... I will add fluoride ingestion by the Mother, toxic food, Pharma drugs, unfiltered water, polluted air, EMF's, toxins from plastic .... to name a few.

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